

WORKING YOUR WAY BACK HOME

Announcement – Friday, August 11, 2006

- The initiative will enable Mississippi's displaced evacuees to return home to their communities, their families and their way of life.
- It offers the evacuees who were displaced 151 miles from their home help in finding employment or getting the training and skills they need to get a job. It reimburses them for the cost of relocating.
- The initiative is funded by the U. S. Department of Labor. Mississippi is the first state to offer the program, and will serve as a model for other states impacted by Hurricane Katrina.
- The Mississippi Department of Employment Security is the lead agency for Working Your Way Back Home, which is offered through its network of WIN Job Center across the state.
- This initiative also includes a unique partnership with Manpower, Inc., that builds on a relationship that exists between the Department of Labor and Manpower.
- To qualify for Working Your Way Back home, an individual must meet the following criteria:
 - Was displaced by Hurricane Katrina at a distance of 151 miles from their place of residence in Mississippi on August 28, 2005; and

-Is enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act program.

- The program is administered through the state's network of WIN Job Centers. Interested individuals may visit their local WIN Job Center to request information about the program. Information is also available by calling 1-888-844-3577 or going to the MDES website: www.mdes.ms.gov
- Working Your Way Back Home has already assisted 130 evacuees, from as far away as California, Rhode Island and Wyoming.
- To receive reimbursement of travel/relocation expenses, an individual must work with WIN Job Center staff to enroll prior to their move and must ensure that:
 - Relocation assistance was not available from other sources, and
 - Adequate affordable housing is available and/or secured, and
 - There is a valid job offer, or
 - There is training available in a demand occupation in which the individual can succeed.
- Reimbursement is made after the individual has moved and reports to the nearest WIN Job Center. The amount of reimbursement is based on the distance traveled. For example, if the distance traveled is 151 to 200, reimbursement is \$100. For 201 to 400 miles the reimbursement is \$200. The maximum reimbursement is \$700 for 801 miles or more.

- The partnership with Manpower has identified areas with high concentrations of Mississippi evacuees. In these communities, the Department of Labor will broker relationships between the WIN Job Centers and Manpower to reach out to evacuees, conduct assessments of their employability, jointly work on additional skill development where needed, and, where appropriate, Manpower will issue “Career Passports” to those who qualify.
- The WIN in Mississippi system and Manpower partnership will support the creation of “Corporate Sponsorships” that support bringing evacuees home to work in Mississippi and that may include jobs, training, and relocation expenses. Both Manpower and the WIN Job Centers will partner to ensure evacuees have access to all of these resources.
- Reintegration Counselors at the WIN Job Centers will also be assigned to work with evacuees to help them find employment or training, and to assist them with other readjustment needs.

Guests at Governor’s Announcement about Working Your Way Back Home

- Dr. Helen Parker, Regional Administrator, Department of Labor (Atlanta, Georgia)
- Tommye Dale Favre, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security

- Melanie Holmes, Manpower Vice President-Corporate Affairs, North America

There will be other MDES staff attending including: Les Range, Lynn Fitch, Mike Marsh, and staff from the state and local offices.